

**Thomas Jefferson to Charles Pinckney, October 29, 1799, Partly Illegible, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO CHARLES PINCKNEY J. MSS.**

Monticello, Oct. 29. 99.

Dear Sir, —Your favor of Sept. 12. came to hand on the 3d inst. I have delayed acknowledging it in hopes of receiving the longer one you mentioned to have written, but that has not yet reached me. I was both pleased & edified by the piece on Robbins case. It ought to be a very serious case to the judge. I think no one circumstance since the establishment of our government has affected the popular mind more. I learn that in Pennsylvania it had a great effect. I have no doubt the piece you enclosed will run through all the republican papers, & carry the question home to every man's mind. The success of McKean's election is a subject of real congratulation & hope. The majority by which he carried it is not yet known here, but it must have been very great. We have also to expect that the same spirit which prevailed & shewed itself so strongly on that vote, has been equally efficacious in the election of their legislature. Could a republican legislature in Pennsylvania be once added to those south of the Potomac, it would command more respect to our constitution. I consider all the encroachments made on that heretofore as nothing, as mere retail stuff compared with the wholesale doctrine, that there is a common law in force in the U. S. of which & of all the cases within its provisions their courts have cognizance. It is complete consolidation. Ellsworth & Iredell have openly recognized it. Washington has squinted at it, & I have no doubt it has been decided to cram it down our throats. In short it would seem that changes in the principles of our government are to be

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pushed till they accomplish a monarchy peaceably, or force a resistance which with the aid of an army may end in monarchy. Still I hope that this will be peaceably prevented by the eyes of the people being opened & the consequent effect of the elective principle. This is certainly taken place in the middle states. The late misfortunes of France would probably render the consolidationers more enterprising & more intolerant than ever at the next session of Congress, were they not held in check by the British aggressions. You flatter us with the possibility

of coming on by land & taking this in your route. Nothing could be more pleasing to me as it will be to Colo. Monroe & mr. Madison. Our legislature meets on the same day with Congress consequently mr. Madison's motions will be affected accordingly. I wish I knew enough of the roads to recommend the best route to you, but I am unacquainted with them, except so far as to observe that if you come by Halifax the direct line thence would be Brunswick, Amelia, Lile's ford Appomatox & Columbia at the fork of James river, from whence the road hither is good, except the last 8. or 10. miles. Our friend Mason, from whom I lately recd a letter, is well. Wilson C. Nicholas will be his colleague Tazewell, & Monroe will probably be the governor. Notwithstanding the unaccountable event of some of the Congressional elections in April last those for the state legislature will have made that body still more republican than it was. I hope So. Carolina is recovering from the delusion which affected their last election. Accept assurances of the sincere esteem of dear sir, &c.

P. S. I shall not frank my letter lest it should awake the curiosity of the post offices.